



New Hampshire Health Alert Network

Health.Alert@nh.gov

Status: Actual
Severity: Moderate
Message Type: Alert
Sensitive: Not Sensitive
Message Identifier: NH-HAN #20090820 H1N1 School Guidance K-12
Delivery Time: 12 hours
Acknowledgement: No
Originating Agency: NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services

DATE: August 20, 2009

TIME: 3:30 PM EDT

TO: NH School Nurses and Administrators, DPHS Management Team, DPHS Investigation Team, DPHS Outbreak Team

FROM: José T. Montero, MD, Director of the NH Division of Public Health Services

SUBJECT Guidance on H1N1 for Elementary and Secondary Schools
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Guidance on H1N1 for Elementary and Secondary Schools **August 19, 2009**

NH Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS) recommends:

- **Identify ill students and staff as early and quickly as possible.**
- **Send home any ill student or staff. They should stay at home until they have no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.**
- **Continue to encourage good hygiene, which is crucial to preventing the spread of respiratory illnesses.**

Students and Staff

- Maintain general health and hygiene activities in your school. Instruct and remind all students and staff about careful hand washing (and/or use of alcohol hand gel) and the importance of coughing and sneezing into the elbow. In addition, remind everyone not to share drinking containers or utensils.
- Soap and paper towels (and/or hand gel) should be readily available and kept well stocked. Frequently touched surfaces (including desks and keyboards) should be regularly cleaned.
- Any student or staff presenting with influenza-like illness [fever ($>100^{\circ}\text{F}$) and/or cough or sore throat] should be dismissed. They should be instructed to contact their health care provider initially by phone or email to report illness, particularly if they have any underlying medical conditions.
- Ill students and staff should only leave home in case of emergency or to seek medical attention (i.e., clinic visit, pharmacy pickup) and they should wear a face mask while out. If a face mask is not available, tissues or a handkerchief should be used to cover all coughs and sneezes. Ill students and staff should avoid spending time in public places (such as shopping centers or parks) or in others homes because this increases the risk of transmitting illness.

- It is recommended that students and staff who have recovered from illness can return to school 24 hours after their fever has resolved (without the use of antifever medications such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen). Most people with H1N1 infection in the spring of 2009 had a fever lasting from 2-4 days, requiring them to be out of school/work for 3-5 days.
- School nurses should report higher than normal absenteeism to NH DHHS Communicable Disease Section 603-271-4496. Early planning should include identification of a school “sick room” without much traffic where ill students and staff can be kept until they are able to leave school. It is recommended that ill students and staff wear a facemask when in contact with others, and all staff caring for these individuals should use appropriate personal protective equipment. For information on personal protective equipment, please refer to the most current H1N1 Clinical Guidelines at <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/CDCS/han.htm>.
- We do not currently recommend canceling any events or closing any schools given the existing ongoing community spread of H1N1 and the negative consequences of school dismissal. This recommendation may change as we monitor progression of H1N1 in our communities this fall. We recommend consulting with NH DHHS Communicable Disease Section at 603-271-4496 before considering any actions outside of your standard protocols.
- Consider using the attached parent letter template as an informational tool.

Household Contacts of Symptomatic Students and Staff

- Household contacts should:
 1. remain home if they develop symptoms of illness;
 2. minimize contact in the community to the extent possible;
 3. designate a single household family member as the ill person’s caregiver to minimize transmissions to asymptomatic persons.
- Additional resources are available for those caring for someone who is ill at http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm and for those who have developed flu-like symptoms at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm>

For the purposes of this document, “schools” refer to both public and private institutions providing K-12 education to children and/or adolescents in group settings.

This document is consistent with the recommendations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/technicalreport.htm>

For daily updates on the outbreak and other published interim guidance, please reference the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

Please refer to the NH DHHS website at http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/DHHS_SITE/swineflu.htm more information.

For any questions regarding the contents of this message, please contact the NH DHHS Communicable Disease Control and Surveillance Section at 603-271-4496 (after hours 1-800-852-3345 ext.5300).

Attachment: Sample Parent Letter

DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ALERTING VOCABULARY

Message Type

Alert:	Indicates an original alert
Update:	Indicates prior alert has been updated and superseded
Cancel:	Indicates prior alert has been cancelled
Error:	Indicates prior alert has been retracted

Status

Actual:	Communication or alert refers to a live event
Exercise:	Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert
Test:	Communication or alert is related to a technical, system test and should be disregarded

Severity

Extreme:	Extraordinary threat to life or property
Severe:	Significant threat to life or property
Moderate:	Possible threat to life or property
Minor:	Minimal threat to life or property
Unknown:	Unknown threat to life or property

Sensitive

Sensitive:	Indicates the alert contains sensitive content
Not Sensitive:	Indicates non-sensitive content

Message Identifier: A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation.

Delivery Time: Indicates the timeframe for delivery of the alert.

Acknowledgement: Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the timeframe in which a response is required.

Originating Agency: A guaranteed unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.

Alerting Program: The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.

You have received this message based upon the information contained within our emergency notification database.

If you have a different or additional e-mail or fax address that you would prefer to be used please contact:

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